California and Canada partner on climate action; Plan aims to stave off consequences of warming planet

The Toronto Star

June 10, 2022 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 493 words

Byline: James Mccarten The Canadian Press

Body

Canada and California are kindred progressive spirits on climate change, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Thursday as he and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau unveiled a new blueprint for working together to stave off the worst consequences of a warming planet.

The framework signed by Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault and Environmental Protection Secretary Jared Blumenfeld, their respective bosses standing behind them, includes modest expansions on a similar 2019 agreement.

It also advances policy and regulatory steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants in both jurisdictions as well as conservation measures and dealing with the worsening threat of wildfires.

And it will stand the test of time, Newsom said - regardless of who is in power in the California governor's mansion, the White House or the Prime Minister's Office.

California is a $3.3-trillion a year economy, he said - the fifth-largest in the world, and a "stable partner" whose efforts to address climate issues and pollution standards has been influencing other states and countries, including Canada, for decades.

"We punch above our weight," Newsom said, describing the state as a "stable partner" whose regulatory reforms have stood the test of time and the political whims of the electorate. "We carry a lot of weight as it relates to low-carbon green growth, as it relates to efforts to change the way we produce and consume energy - regardless of who's in the White House."

Trudeau said Canada will always find favour with a partner that's willing to press ahead and make progress on issues of shared significance.

"Canada has always been a country that engages in the world, and whether it's engaging with like-minded countries or like-minded states like California, we're just there to get things done," Trudeau said. "When we find alignment on so many things - as we always have with California, but as we specifically have under Gavin Newsom's administration - we jump on it."

Trudeau delivered an impassioned defence of his government's efforts to rebrand Canada, a country economically dependent on its fossil-fuel resources, as a champion of tackling climate change.

It's precisely because of that reputation as an oil-producing nation that Canada has extra credibility on climate issues, Trudeau said.

"Moving forward on climate change is really hard for us. We have a thriving fossil fuel industry in our country at a time where the world continues to run on fossil fuels and will for a number more years," he said. "The fact that we have that means it's all the more important for us to ... show real leadership on fighting climate change, and that's what we've done."

Later, in a meeting with Trudeau, U.S. President Joe Biden said Canada and the U.S. share a similar vision for the hemisphere.

"The work that we can do on supporting and projecting and sharing our values is a way of actually supporting and impacting citizens around the world," Trudeau said.

The Canadian Press

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Journal Code: TTA

Subject: CLIMATE ACTION (91%); CLIMATE CHANGE (90%); GLOBAL WARMING (90%); HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (90%); NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS (90%); POLLUTION (90%); POLLUTION & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (90%); PRIME MINISTERS (90%); AGREEMENTS (78%); EMISSIONS (78%); ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES (78%); ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENTS (78%); GOVERNMENT ADVISORS & MINISTERS (78%); GOVERNORS (78%); GREEN ECONOMY (78%); GREEN GROWTH (78%); GREENHOUSE GASES (78%); TALKS & MEETINGS (78%); AIR QUALITY REGULATION (77%); CONSERVATION (77%); ENVIRONMENTAL LAW (77%); ENVIRONMENTALISM (77%); REGULATORY COMPLIANCE (77%); GOVERNMENT PROCEDURE & LAWMAKING (76%); REBRANDING (73%); FIRES (70%)

Industry: GLOBAL WARMING (90%); ENERGY & UTILITIES (89%); FOSSIL FUELS (89%); EMISSIONS (78%); GREEN ECONOMY (78%); GREEN GROWTH (78%); OIL & GAS INDUSTRY (76%); REBRANDING (73%); ENERGY CONSUMPTION (71%)

Person: GAVIN NEWSOM (92%); JOE BIDEN (79%); JUSTIN TRUDEAU (79%)

Geographic: CALIFORNIA, USA (94%); CANADA (95%); UNITED STATES (92%); NORTH AMERICA (79%)

Load-Date: June 10, 2022